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Shortcuts: Valentines Day

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SHORTCUTS

Valentine's Day

It's coming whether you like it or not. Here are some suggestions
that will make Cupid's arrival a little easier. by Shandra Wendorff



If shades of pink make you cringe, this isn't your month. On one hand, maybe you're anticipating a romantic evening with your significant other. Then again, you could be seriously considering blowing up the local Hallmark. Either way, there's no stopping it — Feb. 14 inevitably means an onslaught of candy, flowers, mushy

movies, and all that stuff you either love or hate. The bad side: Valentine's Day is really just a marketing ploy that most college students can't afford. The good side: You get to eat candy.

Here are some Web sites to help you channel your inner Valentino.

Make some phone calls

www.dialpad.com offers free phone service for national calls. This is ideal for long-distance lovers, and it gives you an excuse to call everyone in your little black book. The catch is, you need a microphone for your computer. If you've got that, just dial out from the site. It's not a crystal-clear connection, but you don't have to spend a dime for your chat-fest.

Learn how to be suave.

If you're still asking people what their sign is, pay attention to this one. www.adolescent-adulthood.com (don't let the name fool you) lists catchy icebreakers. There's also an idiot-proof flirting manual, dating guide, dumping tutorial, and a section titled "Kissing Explained" that teaches you how to avoid "The Roto Rooter," "The Deep Sea Diver," and "The Lizard."

Send an e-card.

There are plenty of sites on the Web where you can personalize cards from V-Day selections. www.regards.com or www.bluemountain.com are both good ones.

Get Shakespearean.

Most people are better at anything besides writing poetry (for God's sake, it doesn't have to rhyme). You know that you don't have the gift of verse, so why don't you just borrow some of the stuff that's worked for centuries? It's not called plagiarism on Valentine's Day; it's called romance. So haul yourself down to Parks Library and check out books of sonnets for some inspiration.

Buy stock in flower shops

Hey, they may not be original, but who can argue with tradition? Flowerama, 104 Lincoln Way, has a wide selection and although the prices are about \$30 for a dozen wrapped beauties, it's worth it. If not, go to the Hy-Vee floral shoppes.

If you're going the sweet route, think about going to a confectionery like Temptations, 309 Main Street, which offers chocolates, truffles, and chocolate roses. Target, Wal-Mart, and the grocery stores also sell enough goodies to make you feel 10 pounds heavier just by looking.

So there it is. Above all, don't break your bankbook, and try to enjoy yourself on Valentine's Day (or at least not spend it hating everybody else).

Shandra Wendorff is a sophomore in journalism and an Ethos staff writer.